Dr. Fawzia: Education & Parenting

# Are Tests Accurate?

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When my second son started First Grade, he started bringing home 80’s. To me, the Asian overachiever, this was a puzzle. So we went over the Reading test together.

The first page had a big picture of an elephant, a beach ball, and a mouse. Then a “word bank” in a box showed the words: elephant, ball and mouse. Question One: “…………. is big.” My son had written (in perfect handwriting): “The ball”. Teacher had crossed it: Wrong!

I asked him, “Why did you write *The Ball*?” He hung his head. So I made my voice very sweet and soft, and cooed, “Dear, I am not trying to scold you. I just want to understand.” Eventually, he managed to communicate. “Well, I just cannot write “elephant” there. You see, first, it should be “***The*** elephant” (correct). And then… they didn’t ask for the *biggest* thing here, just the *big* one. And the ball IS bigger than the mouse after all… And then, you see, listen to this: “E-le-phant is big…” Then listen to this: “The Ball is Big!” Which one sounds better?

I was stunned. My son was reading. He was correcting the teacher’s grammar, and making rhythmic poetry. Now, what was that test supposed to assess?